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DE RUEHJA #3490 3650509
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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7526
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4611
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1827
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3608
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1370
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2206
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0509
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 003490

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, DRL, DRL/IRF, DRL/AWH
INR FOR CHARLIE ZENZIE
NSC FOR EPHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KISL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM -- ARRESTS MADE IN ATTACKS ON
SECT

REF: A. JAKARTA 3464

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 3442

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The police have arrested approximately 50 people in connection with attacks on an Islamic sect in West Java. Prosecutors are examining whether to bring formal charges. Local Muslim leaders played a positive role in making sure the arrests were peaceful. The fact that the arrests have taken place is positive, indicating that the GOI will not allow Muslim militants to terrorize people accused of being heretics. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) ARRESTS IN WEST JAVA: On December 29, the police arrested approximately 50 people for recent attacks on West Java's Ahmadiyah community (see reftels). (Note: The Ahmadiyah are an Islamic sect, which is considered heretical by mainline Sunni Muslims.) The alleged militants surrendered peacefully to the police and were accompanied by several hundred sympathizers who escorted them to the local police station. Prosecutors are examining whether to bring formal charges. Local Ahmadiyah contacts tell us that the police detained six of the alleged militants and released the remainder for the time being, pending the Attorney General's decision on whether to prosecute them. The alleged perpetrators may be charged with committing acts of violence toward persons or property.

[1](#)3. (C) ISLAMIC LEADERS' ROLE: Local Muslim leaders apparently played a key role in making sure events proceeded peacefully. Based on what Mission has heard, the involvement of local officials of the Indonesia Ulama Council (MUI) appears to have been critical in convincing the alleged attackers to surrender peacefully to the police (after the GOI announced it was searching for them). One Muslim cleric said--after meeting with local police--that he condemned the attacks and emphasized that Islam should not be equated with violence, adding that "we'll abide by the legal process of the police."

[1](#)4. (C) Nationally, however, MUI continues to press for the Ahmadiyah group to be banned. MUI Chair Chalil Ridwan reiterated his request that the Attorney General's Office ban

Ahmadiyah because they are "a threat to public order." Ridwan also cited MUI fatwas (religious decrees) declaring Ahmadiyah to be "outside of Islam and deviant." MUI's request will be discussed by the Office for Supervision of Belief (Pakem)--an office under the Attorney General established with the authority to ban religious sects. According to press reports, Pakem will meet in early January to discuss the Ahmadiyah's status.

15. (C) POSITIVE NEWS: The fact that the arrests have taken place is positive, indicating that the GOI will not allow militants to terrorize people accused of being heretics. As next steps, of course, the alleged perpetrators also need to be charged and prosecuted. In the past, perpetrators of actions of this sort have often got away without prosecution. The role of local Muslim leaders also seems to have been positive, perhaps indicating that the situation is finally cooling down in West Java.

HUME